

Serial No.: 10/663,946
Amendment dated 24 May 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed 24 February 2005

Amendments to the Drawings

The attached sheets of drawings include formal drawings of Figs. 1-6.

These sheets replace the original sheets including Figs. 1-6.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets (Figs. 1-6)

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REMARKS

This Patent Application has been reconsidered carefully in light of the Office Action dated as mailed on 24 February 2005. A careful reconsideration of the application by the Examiner in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

There is no additional claim fee due for this Amendment because the total number of claims does not exceed the number of independent and dependent claims for which fees have previously been paid.

Request for Telephone Interview

Applicant's undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner to discuss the merits of this Patent Application. The undersigned requests this interview if the amendments and arguments are not deemed sufficient to place this Patent Application in condition for allowance. If the Examiner feels the claims are not allowable for any reason, then please telephone the undersigned, Kevin D. Erickson, at (847) 490-1400.

Allowable Subject Matter

As a preliminary matter, the undersigned wishes to thank Examiner Hogan for the indication that Claims 2, 4 and 17 would be allowable if rewritten in

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independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Amendments to the Claims

By the above Amendment, independent Claim 1 was amended to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 4, which the Examiner indicated contained allowable subject matter.

Claim 4 was rewritten to depend from Claim 18.

Independent Claim 11 was amended to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 17, which the Examiner indicated contained allowable subject matter.

Claim 17 was rewritten to depend from Claim 21.

Independent Claim 18 was amended to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 2, which the Examiner indicated contained allowable subject matter.

Independent Claim 21 was amended to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 4, which the Examiner indicated contained allowable subject matter.

Claims 1-21 remain in the application.

Drawings Objection

In response to the drawings objection and pursuant to the Examiner's requirement, formal drawings of Figs. 1-6 are enclosed herewith.

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In view thereof, the objection to the drawings is believed overcome and notification to that effect is requested.

Claims Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3, 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,546,906 to Vadnais (hereinafter "Vadnais") in view of U.S. Patent 2,953,248 to Troland (hereinafter "Troland"). This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.

In view of the rewriting of Claim 1 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1 and 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vadnais in view of Troland, and further in view of U.S. Patent 690,754 to McKechnie (hereinafter "McKechnie"). This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.

In view of the rewriting of Claim 1 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

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Claims 1 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vadnais in view of Troland, and in further view of U.S. Patent 6,299,034 to Trancheff (hereinafter “Trancheff”). This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.

In view of the rewriting of Claim 1 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 11-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vadnais in view of Troland, and in further view of Trancheff and even further in view of McKechney. This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.

In view of the rewriting of Claim 11 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vadnais in view of Troland, and in further view of Trancheff and even further in view of McKechney. This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.

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In view of the rewriting of Claim 18 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vadnais in view of Troland, and in further view of Trancheff and even further in view of McKechney. This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.

In view of the rewriting of Claim 21 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

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Conclusion

It is believed that the above Amendment places all pending claims in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is solicited. However, should the Examiner detect any remaining issue or have any question, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned, preferably by telephone, in an effort to expedite examination of this Patent Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments